

True Story of the Innkeeper," was published in somewhat shortened form in *The Christian Century*. This book will be at or near the top of the list of Christmas books for this year, and will be a classic for many years to come.

Take Nothing for Your Journey. By Ann Steward. Macmillan, \$2.50. Some subtle quality that suggests Ibsen pervades this novel, though the style is the author's own. The plot and characters carry through from her earlier novel, *Let the Earth Speak*, but with enough recapitulation to make this complete in itself. In delineation of characters and in substantial structure of plot, this is distinguished fiction.

Over the Bridge. By Patience Strong. E. P. Dutton & Co., 50

cents. Paragraphs of religious thought designed to give comfort and courage.

The Bible Question Bee. By Paul N. Elbin. Revell. Questions on the Bible.

The Conscientious Objector and the Law. By Julien Cornell. John Day, \$1.75. (To be reviewed.)

In Search of Maturity, an Inquiry into Psychology, Religion and Self-Education. By Fritz Kunkel. Scribners, \$2.75. (To be reviewed.)

Come and See. By Helen Allen. Revell, \$1.25. A very bird's-eye view, as in a vision, of high spots in the development of the faith from ancient days until now.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Questions and Answers on the War

EDITOR'S NOTE.—So many letters have been received from our readers dealing with the war that space has allowed the publishing of only a small fraction of them. These letters raise many questions which ought to receive direct editorial comment. In lieu of their publication, we have carefully distilled from them the questions whose consideration might contribute somewhat to the clarification of the issues involved. For the most part, each question is formulated in the writer's own words. Occasionally we have taken from the context of the letter a word or phrase needed to sharpen the point of the question. But we have faithfully tried to state the writer's point. Because of the adoption of this method only the initials of each writer have been subscribed. Many of these questions appear also in letters not used. It is hoped that the writers of the unused letters will find their questions answered as fully as if their own formulations had been adopted. Our replies have had to be brief and as concise as possible. If they sometimes seem blunt or dogmatic (as, on reading them over, we fear they may), we trust the generosity of the reader to charge this to the requirements of brevity and conciseness. It has been a rewarding experience to have this "close communion" with our readers, and we hope that on their side also our effort may not be wholly without benefit.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Is actual war the only human situation that you would declare to be a "necessity"?—A. V. C.

We would welcome our readers' help in answering this question. There are, of course, innumerable situations where action is determined by necessity. Life is shot through with them. Our moral freedom is a very finite possession. What freedom we have can be exercised only within limits defined by necessity. Because this is so, man is incurably religious; for religion, in contrast with simple morality, is man's reaction to the fundamental and all-embracing inexorables of life. Naturally, in the development of our discussion, we have sought for illustrations in other experiences than war, but have been unable to find one which satisfactorily matches the concrete predicament in which a nation and its citizens are placed after a war has actually begun. This may be due to the dullness of our imagination. We hesitate to say *a priori* that war is in a class by itself. Yet it may be so. If any reader is disposed to join us in the search, let him put the question to himself thus: Is there any other situation, (1) bilateral in character, (2) in whose solidarity the individual is so implicated that he is unable to extricate himself but (3) can only choose which of the two sides he will help at the expense of the other (4) without moral or Christian sanction for what he must do to express his choice of either side?

2. Is it fair to classify both the pacifist and the soldier as "fighters," especially when the one is giving as little support as possible to the war effort while the other is giving it as much support as possible?—A. V. C.

Yes, we think it is fair, because it is a fact. Both are fighting. The pacifist who supports the war effort of his country "as little as

possible" is supporting the enemy by the degree in which he withholds his support of his country. Most pacifists are really supporting both sides. But even if a pacifist should calculate that he is nicely dividing his support on a 50-50 basis, he would not thereby cancel out his participation. He would still be fighting, but with divided self. He cannot extricate himself from the war.

3. Would you say that one of the things for which we are fighting in this war is the right of the pacifist not to bear arms?—A. V. C.

No, quite decidedly.

4. Does not the truth of your statement that the pacifist "fighting on the other side" depend upon the identity of the principal enemy? If the main enemy is modern war itself, as the pacifist believes, is not your proposition baseless?—A. V. C.

To say that war is the main enemy does not, to our way of thinking, make sense. War is not an enemy; it is a hideous, monstrous and inescapable calamity which man has brought upon himself by his sin. Our questioner, however, is right in seeking to identify another enemy; but he identifies the wrong thing as the other enemy. Not war, but the sin of the nations (including ourselves) which has brought upon us the calamity of war—their sin, our other and most real enemy. Against that enemy we must wage, not war, but a moral fight for justice.

5. Will you agree that war itself may be a greater menace to human freedom than the ideologies of Hitler and his kind?—A. V. C.

No. Actual war is not a *menace* to human freedom; it is the actualization of the menace. In the regime of war human freedom is not menaced; it is already lost.

6. Would you say that, in order to save the "free way of life," we must win the war at any cost? If so, is it not equivalent to saying that the war must be won though freedom be lost?—A. V. C.

In the regime of war freedom is already lost. That is what it is—it is the loss of freedom by virtue of the abandonment of principle and morality and the commitment of our destiny to sheer force and cunning. The winning of the war will not save the "free way of life." The free way of life will have to be saved after the war by the same means that would have been required had there been no war. And the difficulty of exercising those means will be vastly increased as the result of our having gone to war.

7. Will you concede that this war, like the last one, will have been fought in vain if and when that "dark picture of the future" envisaged by your recent editorial, "Faith and Fear," becomes reality?—A. V. C.

Yes, but we do not need to wait for that "dark picture" to become a reality before conceding that this war will have been fought in vain. For ourselves, we make this "concession" now. But our answer does not mean that it will make no difference.

this war, now that we are actually in it. It means that this war compared with what we might have done before the war began will surely have been fought in vain, aye, infinitely worse than in vain. The war is going to leave the world no better off, but vastly worse off, than had it not been fought. The problem of making a just and durable peace will not be solved by the war. It will not even be eased by it. It will be made vastly harder than it would have been had we had the will to attack it before this war became inevitable. The only good thing that can possibly come out of this war is world-wide repentance. Our only assurance for the future lies in the hope that the horror and terror of another such war may bring the nations to repentance for the sins which brought on this one—a repentance so deep that it will be able to cope with the vastly increased difficulty which this war will surely add to the problem of making a decently peaceable world.

8. You say that the pacifist "cherishes the illusion that in nursing his inward opposition to war he is following Christ." Would you say of an honest man that in cherishing his inward opposition to dishonesty he is following Christ?—A. G. S.

Our emphasis was upon *inward* opposition as contrasted with actual behavior. If the honesty of "an honest man" is only an "inward" opposition to dishonesty, while he practices dishonesty, he would surely not be following Christ. The pacifist's opposition to war, when war is actually on, is purely an inward disposition. He is unable overtly to oppose war after it has begun. He can find no way to express his inner feeling about war, but like all the rest of us is caught in the necessity of fighting and can only choose on which side he shall fight. His "opposition to war," in an actual war situation, is therefore an illusion—it cannot be geared in with any appropriate action; instead, it is contradicted by his actual behavior.

9. Are you not, by magnifying the military necessity above the necessity of Christian compulsion, merely saying, We must obey men rather than God? Are you not putting into the hands of the military the power to determine when Christian people may begin to repent?—W. G. F.

We do not magnify the military necessity *above* Christian duty. The necessity which a war situation imposes is a *fact*, an unescapable fact, and the Christian will accept the necessity and find his duty to God, not in a moral vacuum, but in relation to the concrete necessity. Neither the military nor the civil government has anything to say as to when his repentance shall begin. His repentance is not for the necessity of fighting—he cannot repent of a necessity—but for his share in the common guilt which brought on the war. His repentance should begin now in the midst of the fighting.

10. Notwithstanding your statement concerning pacifists and a tortured conscience, I cannot feel that it is either necessary or wholesome for me, a pacifist, to have a tortured conscience. I pray for a sensitive conscience. I feel my shortcomings. I sense my failure to match my opportunities. What am I to do?—S. J.

Several letters like the above have indicated a misapprehension of our statement concerning the conscience of the pacifist. We see no reason why the convinced pacifist should have a tortured conscience, beyond what our correspondent calls a sensitive conscience over his normal human shortcomings. So long as he believes that it is possible for him to have no part in the war, and that he really has no part in it, his conscience should be (relatively) clear. Our concern was to show him that his clear conscience was based on an illusion, that he was willy-nilly engaged in the fighting and that his every attempt to withdraw from the fighting only resulted in his fighting on the other side.

11. On your premise that the conscientious objector fights on the side of the enemy, should he not be tried for treason and executed?—R. L.

He would be treated in some such fashion if he were in a totalitarian country. But he is a citizen of a democratic country, and

democracy recognizes that the conscience of its citizens is its ultimate bulwark. To override conscience by absolute coercion is to destroy democracy at its foundation. Yet the system adopted by our government represents a compromise of this principle, for the policy of isolating the conscientious objectors in camp or in special assignments obviously involves coercion. The policy is a compromise—both on the part of the nation and on the part of the conscientious objector. The absolutist, on the other hand, who refuses to accept this compromise, is sent to prison even in our democracy. This is theoretically undemocratic and reveals the stultification to which democracy is driven by military necessity. The absolutist, by refusing to accept any compromise, puts himself in the position of fighting absolutely on the enemy side, and is treated, in theory, as a traitor. No doubt, if the absolutist could suggest some way by which he could escape fighting at all, *on either side*, our democratic government would be only too glad to let him take it. Such a way, however, is inconceivable.

12. I grant that the action of the conscientious objector weakens the military strength of the country and to that extent helps the enemy. But what have you to say of the conscientious objector who works in a mental hospital or any of the worthwhile tasks to which he may be assigned? Surely he is not helping Japan or Germany. He is helping his own country.—R. L.

The question answers itself. He is indeed helping his own country, just as all of us, except traitors and seditionists, are helping our own country. The conscientious objector who accepts such a task is a part of the war regime in the same sense that a minister, for example, who accepts exemption from the draft is a part of the war regime. Both are fighting for their country in the way assigned them by the military authority. No one can escape from *fighting* when his *nation* is fighting. As a contributor to the strength of the nation, he supports the men at the front who hurl the bombs. He might just as well, so far as his moral position is concerned, be hurling the bombs himself.

13. Jesus lived in a war situation, yet he refused to take sides in the wars of his time. Should he not therefore have had a tortured conscience for aiding the enemies of his country?—S. J.

The belief that Jesus lived in a war situation is an egregious error which has strangely gained wide credence in pacifist circles. Jesus lived in a peace situation. He never came in contact with actual war, nor did his teaching envision it.

14. When Jesus stood against the Jewish patriots and said, "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's," was he thereby fighting on the side of the Romans? He was weakening the cause of the independence of his own people by not supporting it, but he took his stand nevertheless.—R. L.

The Jews and the Romans were not at war. They were at peace. Though it was the peace of tyranny, it was not war. To "weaken the cause of the independence" of your nation may be bad, but it is not *fighting* against your nation. It may indeed be better strategy for the ultimate winning of your nation's independence than to incite to a war foredoomed to terrible defeat.

15. The dilemma in which a Christian is caught in wartime, you say, is due to the fact that war is a "bilateral phenomenon," and "we all are inextricably caught in its two-sidedness." Is there not a *third* side? War is an argument which has come to the point of blows. Does it not, like every argument, have three sides: our side, their side and the right or Christian side? Is it not possible for Christianity to "get hold of both sides [of a war] at once" and oppose it?—F. F.

There is food for thought in this question, but it must be discriminating thought. (1) War is not an argument; it is the end of all argument. It is the appeal from argument to brute force. (2) There is, indeed, a third side, as our correspondent suggests. It is God's side, and the Christian church (the concrete term for "Christianity") is on that side. The church is not at war—unless

it stultifies itself. Its mission is to interpret God's side of the war, that is, to proclaim what the war is in the light of the Christian revelation of God. The Christian church can, most truly, and should, "get hold of both sides of a war at once," though it cannot oppose it, for it wields no weapon which is applicable in the realm of brute force. Yet it can "take hold of both sides at once" on behalf of a rational and just settlement of the war when the war has either run its full course, or has reached a point where its end in the victory of one side may be apparent to both sides.

But what is possible for the Christian church, as church, is not possible for the Christian citizen. The citizen is "inextricably caught in the two-sidedness of war," but the church is not, because the church is not a citizen of the warring state. It stands outside of the state, outside of both warring states; it is under no obligation to either belligerent state. It is not here because the state either causes or allows it to be here; it is here because God put it here, among other things, to save the state by declaring God's will for the state.

In time of war it is the church's task to proclaim that the war is God's judgment upon the nation for the common guilt in which each belligerent nation shares, and shares without distinction of degree, before him. It is the church's task to call the nation to repentance and regeneration with respect to its policies of selfish nationalism and other policies, whether blind or deliberate, which led to the war. It is also the task of the church to interpret to its own members who are citizens of the state and are caught inextricably in the two-sidedness of the conflict so that they have no alternative but to fight—to interpret to them the same need of repentance for the sin which has brought on the war, a sin which they share by virtue of their solidarity with the common life of their nation. This is the church's way of "getting hold of both sides of a war at once."

16. You say: "The Christian Century would welcome a negotiated peace at any time." Would you favor "bilateral negotiation of the belligerents before they surrender" if negotiations were arranged through some intermediary? How can the Axis governments be deprived of their power to do evil through negotiations short of their military defeat?—R. M. T.

Yes, we would favor negotiations for peace at any time. We regard the term "unconditional surrender" as most unfortunate. It is not antithetical to "negotiated peace." As used at Casablanca by Churchill and Roosevelt it was hardly more than a form of military rodomontade. The term was made famous by Grant at Fort Donelson, but it applied only to that local situation, not to the Confederacy as a whole. When Lee surrendered at Appomattox he already knew what the conditions were. Lincoln and the north had made the conditions abundantly clear from the outset of the war. Surrender was to mean the return of the Confederate states to the union. The surrender was the acceptance of those conditions. The surrender of Italy was heralded as "unconditional," but it was also "negotiated." Eisenhower gave his terms to Badoglio, and Badoglio accepted them.

The issue as between a "negotiated peace" and a military victory is not between an "easy peace" and a "hard peace." A negotiated peace before surrender may be just as "hard" as the peace which would follow a definitive military victory. It will register the military realities which obtain at the time of the negotiations. If one side is convinced that its defeat is imminent, the conditions arrived at by negotiation will be substantially the same as the potential victor would impose were the struggle to be carried to a knockout. If both sides are exhausted and uncertain of the outcome, there will be give and take in the negotiations. But neither side will take the initiative in asking for negotiations so long as it has hopes of winning the war. To ask for negotiations is to betray military weakness and only intensifies the determination of the enemy to win.

The point which The Christian Century was emphasizing was the importance of stating our post-victory aims now, before victory is attained. A declaration of these aims would be, in effect, the same as laying down our cards, face up, on the table of a negotiating conference with the enemy. By declaring our postwar aims

fighting, could weigh them against the cost of continuing the struggle. These terms—postwar aims—could be as hard or as generous as if they were presented at a negotiating conference.

17. I believe, despite your apparent opinion to the contrary, that the promised peace of God is not an illusion in the inner experience of sincere pacifists.—T. L. P.

And so also do we, despite our correspondent's implied attribution to us of a contrary opinion. The Christian pacifist who believes he is doing the will of God in "refusing to fight" his brother, and the Christian militarist who believes he is doing the will of God in fighting and killing the wicked enemy, are both entitled in good conscience to claim the peace of God in their hearts. That peace is anything but an illusion. Yet here are two equally sincere Christians who derive the peace of God from absolutely contrary bases of motivation. The question with which The Christian Century is concerned is whether the basis of this peace of God is valid in the one case or in the other. We are compelled to reject its validity in both cases. In the case of the militarist, because we do not believe that it is the will of God that he should fight. In the case of the pacifist, because we believe that his "refusal to fight" is itself an illusion—he cannot escape fighting. Our problem is, therefore, to discover, if we can, the true basis upon which the Christian may validly find peace of soul in wartime. The constructive thesis with which our readers are familiar is our answer.

18. You say that the necessity of our participation in war is the price which God demands in payment for our sins.—A. S. G.

No, we do not say that. We say that the necessity of participation in war is the "price" man pays for his sins and the "price" God himself pays for having endowed man with freedom to defy him. God does not "demand" this hideous price from man; man by his sin imposes it on both himself and God.

19. When war comes as a result of following those methods which so many of us oppose, the pacifist minority feel all the more strongly that the true necessity is an intensified continuation of the waging of peace, rather than a suddenly intensified continuation of the methods of war; and the pacifist can rightly claim that it becomes a true opposition to the fundamental forces of war, regardless of the fate of the state.—A. S. G.

We wish to subscribe heartily to this penetrating statement, though it is made by our correspondent as if it were opposed to our position. The only modification we would suggest is to substitute for "the true necessity," the words "the Christian's duty," thus reserving "necessity" for its precise connotation. It is the Christian's duty, even while he accepts the necessity of his involvement in the war, to intensify his activity in the waging of peace. This intensified activity for peace is the fruit of his repentance for the sin which plunged him into the necessity of fighting.

20. All of us do, indeed, as you say, support the war effort in some way. But do not all of us oppose the war effort in some way? Most of us oppose it unknowingly. We are careless in our jobs. We refuse to buy all the bonds we can buy. Pacifists simply take further and more effective steps. They refuse to bear arms. Naturally, they pay no income tax if they are in C.P.S. camps. [Those who have independent income pay income tax.—EDITOR.] Most of them, if not all, refuse to buy bonds. They oppose the war effort as well as support it. All of us do.—I. S.

The point at issue in our discussion is not whether the pacifist supports or opposes the "war effort" of his country, but whether he opposes war. Insofar as he supports his country's war effort he obviously supports war; and insofar as he withdraws his support from his country's war effort he supports the enemy's war effort and so supports war. That is the predicament in which war places every citizen, pacifist or non-pacifist.

A further installment of questions and answers will appear in the next week's issue.